

SPOTLIGHT: Making 'Wedding of a Lifetime,' Kaua'i style



Dennis Fujimoto/Kaua'i Business Report

Left to right: Buddy and Dorri Lizama of Hawaiian Creative Video, Haunani Rossi of Kaua'i Aloha Weddings Inc., Mona Gonzaludo of Plantation Gardens Restaurant, Jan Masukawa of Rain-bow Photography and Dode Martin of MartinRoberts Design.

Kimberly Yama
KAUA'I BUSINESS REPORT

"It's something that I've always wanted to do ... and being born and raised in Hawai'i you kind of want to give back," said Haunani Rossi about her effort to be part of the first "Wedding of a Lifetime" on Kaua'i.

For the past two years Hawai'i Bride and Groom Magazine along with OC16 have been giving away a "Wedding of a Lifetime" to a couple in need. With support from participating vendors, the couple wins a free dream wedding.

"We wanted to give back to the people of Hawai'i," said Julie Aragaki, publisher and owner of Hawai'i Bride and Groom Magazine. "We spoke with Oceanic Cable and they agreed to give us \$1 million in advertising."

Aragaki interviewed each couple who entered and discovered all were deserving of the giveaway. "It's just so refreshing to see that genuine love and compassion," she said. "It's so nice to see that it's still out there."

"Haunani, she contacted us

and said, 'We want to do something like this,'" said Aragaki.

Thanks to Rossi's initiative, one of the three winners this year will have their wedding of a lifetime on the beautiful South Shore of Kaua'i.

"We kind of wanted to start off small because we've never done it; and hopefully we'll be able to offer it every year," said Rossi who, with her husband Mark, owns Kaua'i Aloha Weddings Inc.

Rossi, along with eight other vendors, are donating their time, money and services for this

year's winning couple, Todd and LaVerne Jones of O'ahu.

One of the participating vendors, Buddy and Dorri Lizama of Hawaiian Creative Video, expressed how important it is for them to give back in order to get back.

"Times are a little different now than before," said Buddy. "We have to try all kinds of different angles to promote Kaua'i and get some of the wedding business to come back."

He said this event will create an interest for Kaua'i and reintroduce the great services the

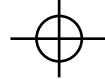
island still offers.

After 29 years of business, Dorri explained that they continue to, "go out with an attitude that every wedding is a new wedding and that we're gonna do the best that we can for that couple."

Dode Martin of MartinRoberts Design said they are donating all the decor for the entire wedding.

"We'd like to do these things a couple times a year for dif-

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ferent aspects of the community," he said.

Martin said he would like to "bring those weddings back like it used to be and show that we can do that here. I think that's been part of the problem in the wedding industry on the islands. Other islands seem to have a few more resources and we just need to remind people that we do have those resources here, and this is a great way to do that."

As one of the largest donors, Martin-Roberts Design is contributing over \$6,500 of decor goods and services for this event. They have been in business on Kaua'i for over eight years.

"When we were asked if we wanted to participate in the Wedding of a Lifetime, we

were very happy to be able to help share in the making a wedding of a lifetime come true," Jeane Michioka, owner of Rainbow Photography Kaua'i, said.

Michioka, who has been in the wedding photography business for over 20 years on Kaua'i, shared how touched she's been being able to witness such significant and beautiful moments in people's lives.

"When I heard about Todd and LaVerne Jones, and the trials and tribulations they have endured, I became very excited for them," she said. "I know they will have a very wonderful day and we hope their dreams come true for them. For that reason, participating in the Wedding of a Lifetime brings a huge smile to our faces."

Along with Kaua'i Aloha Wed-

formed between these vendors.

"Everybody is different, their expectations are different, and when you start to work with everybody, you get to know them and you form a team," said Rossi.

"I don't stress out," said Mona Gonzaludo, Special Events Manager for the Plantation Gardens Restaurant and Bar. "We trust each other."



A few of the participating vendors discuss about the ceremony which will take place at Plantation Gardens Restaurant.

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dings Inc., Hawaiian Creative Video, MartinRoberts Design and Rainbow Photography Kaua'i, other vendors and volunteers participating in this event are Kiahuna Plantation, Plantation Gardens Restaurant, Icing on the Cake, music by Mark Rossi and officiated by Reverend Darryl Kua with Westside Christian Center.

After working with each other for months now, a strong bond is

"I think it's just a win-win situation for everyone, not only are we promoting ourselves and our businesses, but we're truly helping a couple and we're going to be in their memories forever," Gonzaludo said. "So I think it's wonderful what we're doing."

Todd and LaVerne Jones will have their wedding this July at the Plantation Gardens Restaurant in Po'ipu.



Contributed photo by Todd Jones

Throughout their lives together, Todd and LaVerne Jones overcame all odds against them. One year after eloping, both at age 19, Todd and LaVerne had planned a huge wedding with their family and friends. However, two weeks before their big day, LaVerne suffered from a brain aneurysm and Todd was told she had a 5 percent chance of making it. That same month, Todd's mother passed away from cancer at the same hospital.

LaVerne recovered a year later and was advised not to have any children at that time. To their surprise, however, she became pregnant and successfully gave birth to their first daughter and had their second daughter a few years later.

In 2005, Todd and LaVerne were planning their 25th anniversary, when again right before the event, LaVerne was hospitalized. She had suffered from a severe stroke at age 43.

Now, three years later she has almost fully recovered. Although she can't go back to work, her husband continues to take care of her. Finally, after 28 years of waiting, this July Todd and LaVerne will get their dream wedding they have always wanted.

If you'd like to know more about the vendors who helped Todd and LaVerne make their dream come true, contact them with the information provided below.

Kaua'i Aloha Weddings Inc.

Address: 356 Likeke Place, Kapaa, HI 96746

Phone: (808) 822-1477

Fax: (808) 822-7067

Website: www.kauai alohawed.com

Hawaiian Creative Video

Address: Post Office Box 1117 Kapaa, HI 96746

Phone: (808) 822-5784

Website: www.hcvideo.net

MartinRoberts Design

Phone: (808) 332-9194

E-mail: info@martinroberts.com

Website: www.martinroberts.com

Rainbow Photography Kaua'i

Phone: (808) 828-0555

E-mail: rainbo@aloha.net

Website: rainbowphoto.com

Outrigger Kiahuna Plantation

Address: 2253 Poipu Road, Koloa, HI 96756

Phone: (808) 742-6411

Plantation Gardens Restaurant

Address: 2253 Poipu Road, Koloa Kauai, HI 96756

Phone: (808) 742-2121

E-mail: info@pgrestaurant.com

Website: www.pgrestaurant.com

Icing on the Cake

Address: PO Box 397, Kapaa, HI 96746

Phone: (808) 823-1210

E-mail: icingonthecake.kauai@gmail.com